



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

June 28, 2005

# News Release

## **TWO MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO TRAFFICKING IN COUNTERFEIT DESIGNER JEANS**

SAN DIEGO – Two men have pleaded guilty in federal court here to charges they conspired to smuggle counterfeit designer jean labels and rivets into the United States through the Otay Mesa border crossing as part of a plan to distribute hundreds of pairs of counterfeit jeans in the Los Angeles area.

Felipe Gonzalez, 28, and Alfredo Esqueda, 35, both of Los Angeles, pleaded guilty to federal felony charges of conspiring to traffic in counterfeit goods. In addition, Esqueda admitted to committing perjury in connection with testimony he previously provided in a criminal trial. The charges are the result of a three-year investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

“Trafficking in counterfeit merchandise is a multi-billion dollar global business that robs governments of vital revenues and the industry of its due profits,” said Serge Duarte, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in San Diego. “ICE is committed to dismantling these schemes because the profits from such illegal ventures often go to fund more criminal enterprises.”

Gonzalez, a Mexican national, admitted he agreed to traffic in counterfeit goods with Esqueda and others. As part of the scheme, Gonzalez acknowledged arranging for people to bring him counterfeit Calvin Klein labels from Mexico. Once the labels were delivered to him in Los Angeles he had them sewn onto counterfeit jeans. Gonzalez later sold the falsely labeled pants in Los Angeles as authentic Calvin Klein jeans.

In his plea, Esqueda admitted conspiring to bring counterfeit Levi and Versace labels and rivets from Mexico through the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. The labels were delivered to Los Angeles, and sewn onto counterfeit jeans, which Esqueda subsequently sold as authentic. He admitted selling between \$400,000 to \$1 million in counterfeit goods.

Both defendants are scheduled to be sentenced before the Honorable Jeffrey T. Miller October 7 at 9 a.m.

# ICE #